

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney  
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***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - June 9, 2004

Eric Wells, a member of the West Coast Crips gang, was today sentenced in San Diego by United States District Court Judge M. James Lorenz to 360 months in custody, followed by six years of supervised release, for his role in shooting two rival gang members. Each of the victims suffered a gun shot wound to the leg. On April 9, 2003, a jury convicted Wells on three counts of Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering ("VCAR") and one count of using a firearm during a crime of violence.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Linda A. Frakes, who prosecuted the case, Wells was found guilty at trial of conspiring with West Coast Crip gang members to murder members of a rival gang. The attempted murders occurred on January 25, 2001. Wells was charged under the VCAR statute. The indictment alleged, and the jury found, that Wells was a member of the West Coast Crips gang, an enterprise

engaged in racketeering activity, and that the attempted murders were committed to promote Wells' position within the West Coast Crips.

Wells' codefendant, Duane Wicker, was convicted in the same jury trial on one count of VCAR. Wicker was previously sentenced to 120 months in custody. Codefendants Robert Adams and Robert Wood, who are leaders in the West Coast Crips, pled guilty on February 28, 2003. They were sentenced in July 2003 for their roles in the VCAR case and for a related crack cocaine case. Adams was sentenced to 308 months in custody and Wood was sentenced to 300 months in custody.

United States Attorney Lam stated, "Gang members who commit violent crimes with firearms are a scourge on our community. Defendants such as Wells, Wicker, Adams and Wood will be held accountable for their actions and punished severely, as demonstrated by the sentences from 10 to 30 years awarded in this case."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Violent Crimes Task Force.

## **DEFENDANT**

Eric Wells

## **SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1959 – Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering  
Maximum penalty per count: ten years; fine of \$250,000

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 924(c) – Use of a Firearm During a Crime of Violence  
Maximum penalty per count: ten years consecutive; fine of \$250,000

## **AGENCIES**

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Violent Crimes Task Force - Gang Group